

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for fast image fetching and processing comprising:

a host computer having a buffer, a driver, a control key configuration file, and

5 an application program associated with said control key configuration file;

a scanner communicated with said host computer, said scanner having a plurality of function keys and an optical module, each of said plurality of function keys being operable in response to said control key configuration file, said optical module being controlled in response to said driver for reading an image of a scanned 10 object and converting said scanned image to image data which is saved in said buffer and loaded in an application program associated with said control key configuration file; and

an output unit communicated with said host computer for generating the 15 operation result of said application program.

15 2. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of function keys comprises a scan function key, and said output unit is a display for viewing the scanned image of said scanned object opened by an image processor.

20 3. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of function keys comprises a scan function key, and said output unit is a display for viewing the scanned image of said scanned object opened by an editor.

25 4. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of function keys comprises a print function key, and said output unit is a printer for outputting the scanned image of said scanned object.

30 5. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of function keys comprises a fax function key, and said output unit is a modulation/demodulation device (MODEM) which is enabled by an application program in response to said fax function key for transmitting the scanned image of said scanned object to a receiver after inputting a fax number of said receiver.

6. The apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein said application program further comprises a software keyboard for inputting said fax number.

5      7. The apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein said scanner further comprising:  
          digit buttons for inputting said fax number.

8. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of function keys comprises an e-mail function key, and said output unit is a modulation/demodulation  
10     device (MODEM) which is enabled by an application program in response to said e-mail function key for transmitting the scanned image of said scanned object as an attachment file in a new e-mail.

15     9. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said plurality of control keys comprises an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) function key for enabling an OCR application program to convert the scanned image of said scanned object to a text file and display the result on said output unit.

20     10. The apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said output unit is a display for showing said Optical Character Recognition (OCR) application program and the process result of said scanned image.

25     11. A method for fast image fetching and processing, comprising the steps of:  
          providing a host computer having a buffer, a driver, a control key configuration file, and an application program associated with said control key configuration file;  
          providing a scanner communicated with said host computer, said scanner having a plurality of function keys and an optical module controlled by said driver, for converting a scanned image into digital image data;  
          defining said control key configuration file by recording the procedural steps  
30     for each of said plurality of function keys associated with an application program;  
          and

performing said procedural steps in response to the operation of each of said plurality of function keys.

12. The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein said step of defining said control key configuration file comprises the step of:

defining a scan function key, an associated driver, an associated application program, an associated program routine to execute said driver and said application program for loading a scanned image.

10 13. The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the execution of said control key configuration file comprises the steps of:

enabling said driver to read the scanned image of a scanned object in response to said scan function key;

saving said scanned image of said scanned object as an image file; and

calling said associated application program to open said image file.

14. The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein said step of defining said control key configuration file comprises the step of:

defining a print function key, an associated driver, an associated application program, an associated program routine to execute said driver and said application program for sending a scanned image to a printer.

15. The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the execution of said control key configuration file comprises the steps of:

enabling said driver to read the scanned image of a scanned object in response to said print function key;

saving said scanned image of said scanned object as an image file; and

sending said image file to said printer.

30 16. The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein said step of defining a control key configuration file comprises the step of:

defining a fax function key, an associated driver, an associated application program, an associated program routine to execute said driver and said application program for sending a scanned image to a receiver via a MODEM.

- 5 17. The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the execution of said control key configuration file comprises the steps of:

enabling said driver to read the scanned image of a scanned object in response to said fax function key;

saving said scanned image of said scanned object as an image file; and

- 10 sending said image file to a receiver via said MODEM.

18. The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein said step of defining control key configuration file comprises the step of:

defining an e-mail function key, an associated driver, an associated application program, an associated program routine to execute said driver and said application program for loading a scanned image.

19. The method as claimed in claim 18, wherein the execution of said control key configuration file comprises the steps of:

enabling said driver to read the scanned image of a scanned object in response to said e-mail function key;

saving said scanned image of said scanned object as an image file; and

calling said associated application program to send said image file as an attachment file for a new e-mail transmission.

- 25 20. The method as claimed in claim 11, wherein said step of defining said control key configuration file comprises the step of:

defining an OCR function key, an associated driver, an associated application program, an associated program routine to execute said driver and said application program for loading a scanned image.

21. The method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the execution of said control key configuration file comprises the steps of:

enabling said driver to read the scanned image of a scanned object in response to said OCR function key;

- 5 saving said result of said OCR procedure as an image file; and  
calling said associated application program to open said image file.

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